



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM  
Mr Jeremy Hanson MLA (Chair), Ms Suzanne Orr MLA (Deputy Chair),  
Mr Michael Petterson MLA

## Submission Cover Sheet

**Inquiry into drone delivery systems in the ACT**

**Submission Number: 111**

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I am writing to express my concerns about the introduction of commercial drones in the ACT. Chief among my concerns is the impact on the environment. Apart from the very real danger of mid-air collisions between drones and birds, drones have been shown to cause animals to be unduly stressed, which then can affect breeding and/or cause them to leave an area. For example, a [US study](#) revealed bears exhibit a stress response to drones.

According to an article in the [National Geographic](#):  
'In almost all of the trials, the bears' heart rates—measured by sensors previously implanted in the animals' bodies—went up significantly, especially when the bear was surprised by the drone. A big boost even occurred in a female bear who had recently gone into her den to hibernate.'

In 2014 the [Yosemite National Park](#) banned drones because of the negative impact they were having on the environment and safety. Here in Australia researchers, who use drones to monitor wildlife, are so concerned about the impact of drones, that they are calling for strict protocols. See for example:

[What Impact Do Drones Have On Wildlife.](#)

Despite the growth of Canberra, it is still known as the garden city, and many people choose to live here because of the way it is integrated with the natural environment and its rich and diverse wildlife. With climate change already having caused the extinction of many species of animals and insects, and with many more under threat, I urge the ACT government to seriously consider introducing a technology that will put our ecosystem under more stress.

As well, drones will negatively impact on the city soundscape and consequently the liveability of Canberra. The relative quiet of Canberra (and the joy of being able to hear bird calls) in comparison to other cities not only attracts people to live here but is something I believe we should cherish and safeguard. A [NASA](#) study found that the buzz of a drone is more annoying to people than the rumble of cars and trucks.

Of concern too is the very real potential for injury from falling drones. Appearing before Senate estimates, Mr Chris Manning from the Australian Transport and Safety Bureau said in relation to drones and aviation safety that 'anything in the air is a risk' (Budget Estimates Hansard, 23 May 2017, p. 134).

While I can appreciate that drones can have live-saving applications (for example, delivering medicine to housebound people, search and rescue), I strongly believe we should limit them to these types of operations and for research purposes rather than allow them to operate commercially.